

**National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI)
FY 2015 Competitive Grant Announcement
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

SAKI Funding:

1. How much funding is available to support SAKI?
 - A. BJA has set the award amount for each cooperative agreement awarded under the site-based program at a maximum of \$2 million per grantee (depending on the jurisdiction's need and justification for requested funds provided in the application), and currently projects that approximately 15 sites will receive funding through SAKI in FY 2015 (approximately \$30 million in total). This is subject to change dependent on available appropriations.
 - B. BJA has set the award amount for the training and technical assistance (TTA) cooperative agreement at up to \$6 million. This is subject to change dependent on available appropriations. BJA reserves the right to make more than one award for TTA if it is deemed necessary in order to ensure that the goals of the program are met.
 - C. The available funding listed in the solicitations is an estimate only and is subject to change. The total funding put toward these activities will not be final until all awards are made. A portion of all appropriated funding is used to cover costs associated with administering the programs. However, those costs are not final at this time and are subject to change.

SAKI Site-Based Solicitation FAQs:

2. What types of organizations are eligible to apply for the SAKI site-based solicitation?

Eligible applicants are state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies; prosecutor's offices; or a governmental non-law enforcement agency acting as fiscal agent for the applicant.
3. Can a crime lab apply?

While we encourage crime labs to be co-applicants, the primary applicant must be from one of the aforementioned entities.
4. What is the projected project period for the SAKI site-based awards?

BJA is soliciting applications for cooperative agreements for project periods of 3 years.

5. Can I use this funding to address backlogged SAKs currently awaiting testing in my jurisdiction's crime laboratory?

Funding does not apply to the testing of SAKs that have already been submitted for testing to a lab, or for the purchase of lab equipment. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) administers the DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program to assist eligible states and units of local government to process, record, screen, and analyze forensic DNA and/or DNA database samples, and to increase the capacity of public forensic DNA and DNA database laboratories to process more DNA samples, thereby helping to reduce the number of forensic DNA and DNA database samples awaiting analysis. For more information on NIJ's DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program, go to: www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/lab-operations/evidence-backlogs/Pages/backlog-reduction-program.aspx.

6. How is the BJA SAKI different from the NIJ DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program?

The Sexual Assault Kit Initiative administered by BJA differs substantially from NIJ's DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program. BJA's program is focused on SAKs housed in law enforcement storage rooms, or other facilities, that have never been submitted to a crime lab for testing. While the BJA program does include testing of SAKs, it also aims to address why SAKs continue to remain unsubmitted for testing, and help jurisdictions implement new policies and procedures to prevent this from occurring again. Since the critical needs around unsubmitted SAKs in law enforcement agencies extend well beyond simply testing kits and increasing crime lab capacity, the BJA program also addresses the investigative and prosecutorial aspects of sexual assault cases resulting from the testing and enhancing provision of victim's services. The NIJ program does not provide funding for these activities. NIJ does fund states and units of local government with existing crime laboratories that conduct DNA analysis to process, record, screen, and analyze forensic DNA and/or DNA database samples, and to increase the capacity of public forensic laboratories to process more DNA samples. While many jurisdictions use the funding from the NIJ program to test sexual assault evidence, NIJ's initiative focuses on all types of DNA evidence, which can include SAKs that have already been submitted to crime labs. The NIJ program does not address systems, evidence collection, storage, police, prosecution, and laboratory practices and policies that contributed to the failure to submit SAKs from being tested.

7. How did BJA develop the three-prong model to address the issues associated with unsubmitted SAKs?

The BJA three-pronged model is evidence based, and is informed by the findings emerging from action research projects supported by NIJ in Detroit, MI and Houston, TX. BJA also reviewed recommendations produced by DOJ-sponsored expert meetings and publications on the issue of SAKs. Links to these resources are as follows:

- [*Why Were So Many Sexual Assault Kits Not Tested in Detroit?*](#)
- [*Detroit Sexual Assault Kit Action Research Project*](#)

- [Houston Sexual Assault Kit Research Website](#)
- [A National Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations: Adults/Adolescents](#)
- [New Orleans Sexual Assault Evidence Project: Results and Recommendations](#)
- [Los Angeles Sexual Assault Kit Study](#)
- [Social Science Research on Forensic Science Topical Working Group Meeting Washington, DC, January 23–24, 2013](#)
- [Summary of the Proceedings on Eliminating the Rape Kit Backlog: A Roundtable to Explore a Victim-Centered Approach held May 11-12, 2010](#)

8. Our jurisdiction has already completed an inventory of existing untested SAKs outside of the crime lab. Can we still apply for funding?

Yes. BJA created SAKI to meet the diverse needs of jurisdictions contending with untested SAK issues. Your application must propose to implement a comprehensive sexual assault response program plan that includes all three elements of the BJA model. Funds may be requested to support all the three major elements if required, or, for specific and discrete elements as determined by the needs of your applicant's jurisdiction. For example, funds may be used to support any or all of the following activities: the development of a multidisciplinary group, SAK testing and tracking, assistance with investigations, and enhanced victim services. Regardless of the use of funds proposed, applicants must ensure they still address all three of the model's elements in their program plan. In the case of a jurisdiction that has completed an inventory prior to applying for SAKI funding, they must provide certification of the completion of that process and results of the inventory as outlined in the solicitation. The application must also address the need for funds to support the remaining elements of the proposed project (be it testing, establishing/expanding multidisciplinary response, coordination and reform, or a combination therein), as well as how cases will be tracked throughout the project.

9. BJA has stated that it does not anticipate funding projects that propose allocating more than 50 percent of their grant funds to SAK testing. What if upon completion of the inventory it is discovered that not all SAKs will be able to be tested using the BJA grant?

BJA recognizes that this might be the case. This grant program is intended to assist jurisdictions develop a comprehensive approach to the issue of unsubmitted SAKs and sexual assault case response. Therefore, projects must allocate adequate resources to investigate and prosecute cases and enhance victim support and notification services in response to the evidence garnered through the testing process. Applicants are encouraged to seek funding for testing from additional sources if needed. BJA's TTA provider will also work with grant recipients to attempt to identify additional non-BJA funding resources for the SAK testing component, if required. For example, some law enforcement agencies have previously received philanthropic donations to assist with the processing of SAKs.

10. The testing of unsubmitted SAKs will likely cause greater backlogs in state labs (as a result of processing or the technical review process). Does BJA intend to address this issue as well?

BJA encourages all SAKI recipients to work with the TTA provider to help develop and implement sustainable streamlined and efficient lab protocols and policies. In addition, resources to address this issue may be available through NIJ's DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program. More information on the NIJ program may be found here: www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/lab-operations/evidence-backlogs/Pages/backlog-reduction-program.aspx.

11. Can I buy lab equipment with this money?

No. Lab equipment, e.g., robotics for automated DNA extractions, cannot be purchased with the BJA funding. Resources to purchase lab equipment may be available through NIJ's DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program. More information on the NIJ program may be found here: www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/lab-operations/evidence-backlogs/Pages/backlog-reduction-program.aspx. However, funding under BJA's SAKI program may be used to support the implementation of sustainable automated and streamlined SAK processing procedures (i.e., assist with validations and the development of new Standard Operating Procedures). Further, BJA grant recipients may purchase an electronic evidence tracking system such as those that include barcode scanners and software that can be implemented in a lab setting.

12. If we have already completed the testing phase can we apply for money for the prosecution of cases?

Yes. To qualify for SAKI funding, applicants must propose to implement a comprehensive sexual assault response reform program plan that includes all three elements of the BJA model: 1. Inventory, 2. Creation of a Multidisciplinary Working Group, and 3. Designated Site Coordinator. Funds may be requested to support the three major elements if required, or, for specific and discrete elements as determined by the needs of the applicant's jurisdiction. However, regardless of the proposed use of funds, applicants **must describe how their project will include all three** of the BJA model's elements in their program plan.